



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

October 23, 2002

S. 2773

High Plains Aquifer Hydrogeologic Characterization, Mapping, Modeling, and Monitoring Act

*As reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
on October 8, 2002*

SUMMARY

S. 2773 would establish a joint federal-state program within the Department of the Interior to map and study the groundwater reserve that serves Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming—known as the high plains aquifer. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) would coordinate the joint program and would provide grants and technical assistance to the eight states for projects that address groundwater depletion and other issues. The bill would authorize, for fiscal years 2003 through 2011, the appropriation of whatever amounts are necessary for the state grants and for the federal portion of the program.

Assuming appropriation of the amounts necessary to carry out the high plains aquifer program, CBO estimates that implementing S. 2773 would cost about \$2 million in fiscal year 2003 and \$35 million over the 2003-2007 period. (An additional \$55 million would be spent after 2007, including \$40 million appropriated between 2008 and 2011.) Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 2773 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). Any costs that states incur as a result of participating in the program would be voluntary.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 2773 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION					
Estimated Authorization Level	10	10	10	10	10
Estimated Outlays	2	5	8	10	10

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate CBO assumes that S. 2773 will be enacted by the end of calendar year 2002 and that the amounts estimated to be necessary to carry out the high plains aquifer program are appropriated for each year. The estimated authorization level of \$10 million is based on information provided by the Department of the Interior regarding similar legislation and USGS activities. As provided in the bill, one-half of that amount would be used for the federal component of the program (primarily for coordination, data integration, and technical assistance). The remaining \$5 million would be awarded to the eight states for hydrogeologic characterization, mapping, modeling, and monitoring activities. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar federal-state programs.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 2773 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA. The bill would authorize grants to eight states to map and model the high plains aquifer. Any costs that states incur as a result of participating in the program would be voluntary.

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